

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

Outcome 3 - Employment

DEEWR Question No. EW0131_14

Senator McKenzie asked on 4 June 2013, Hansard page 38

Question

RESJ - update on region data regarding higher education and training

Senator McKENZIE: On notice, could you update on the region data where higher education and training has been identified as one of the issues for the region? I assume you would collect regular evaluation data around that. I would appreciate an update on how the plan has contributed to improving outcomes for regional people, particularly with respect to tertiary education access and training. Ms Cornish: Okay.

Answer

Some examples of Regional Education, Skills and Jobs (RESJ) coordinator activities to address identified issues in relation to higher education and training are:

Victoria – Grampians

Issue 3 - The need to build education, training and employment opportunities within smaller regional communities.

- As a way to test methods of training delivery to rural areas where access to training and education is limited, the RESJ Coordinator for the Grampians RDA region developed a pilot project to test a model using videoconferencing facilities. Over six sessions the pilot project delivered digital literacy training to around 60 participants, the majority over 50 years of age, from isolated rural communities using video conferencing facilities available at local primary schools.

New South Wales – Southern Inland

Issue 4 - Low rates of participation in tertiary education and limited vocational and tertiary options available in the region.

- To accommodate flexible training delivery, the RESJ Coordinator in the Southern Inland RDA region worked with a number of local stakeholders to develop the *Business Bridges – Distance Pathways for School Leavers* pilot project. This project is designed to meet the needs of learners in the Southern Inland RDA region through distance education. Fourteen learners have commenced and will undertake a Diploma in Business integrated with a university bridging course. Graduates obtain guaranteed university entry and an opportunity for advanced standing. The course will conclude in late 2013.

South Australia – Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula

Issue 2 - Below average participation rates in higher education

Issue 3 - Educational engagement, attainment and transition of young people from school to further education, training and employment

- To build the aspirations of school students, the RESJ Coordinator for the Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula RDA region is facilitating a *Uni and TAFE taster* program for around 50 Year 12 students from the region during the July 2013 school holidays. Students will be exposed to the three university campuses in Adelaide, as well as the major TAFE campus. Students will also experience other aspects of studying away from home, such as accommodation options, using public transport and city living and attractions.

Issue 4 - Skills development to meet the current and projected skills required by the region's businesses and industries

- To promote locally available training courses in the Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula RDA region in South Australia, the RESJ Coordinator developed and implemented a regional training portal designed to promote local skills training opportunities within the region. The *Skills on Eyre* project is a joint initiative with the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology. As at 3 May 2013, the site had 43 registered users and 258 courses uploaded.

Victoria – Loddon Mallee

Issue 4 - Increased participation in vocational and tertiary education, particularly in disadvantaged communities

- The RESJ Coordinator for the Loddon Mallee RDA region has played an active role in promoting participation in tertiary education through co-facilitating a number of information sessions in 2012 and 2013 promoting the La Trobe University's Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP). In 2012 the TEP in Mildura had 22 students enrol with 12 completing the program and achieving academic results to enter undergraduate higher education study. In 2013, the TEP program in Mildura will commence on 22 July 2013 and 29 students are enrolled so far. The TEP is an 18 week course developed by the La Trobe University to re-engage individuals with learning and introduce students to the academic environment. Successful completion of the program provides a direct pathway to undergraduate degrees or diploma courses at the La Trobe University and Sunraysia Institute of TAFE respectively.
- The RESJ Coordinator developed the 'Horticulture with a Difference' pilot program delivered in Robinvale by Sunraysia Institute of TAFE from mid-August to early November 2012. This project, which has resulted in employment outcomes for five of the 14 disadvantaged job seekers engaged, had an innovative course structure that included a Certificate II in Horticulture and units of competency in Automotive Studies to creatively link skills that are useful in the agriculture sector. The project was the result of collaboration of local service providers brought together by the RESJ Coordinator and the Victorian Advancing Country Towns project officer.